



CITY OF DUNNELTON

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EFFORTS BY LEADERSHIP OF THE CITY OF DUNNELTON OVER THE YEARS TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE RAINBOW AND WITHLACOOCHEE RIVERS

This document has been drafted as a result of an invitation to provide a list of City of Dunnellon efforts and accomplishments resulting in improvements to and aiding in the protection of the Rainbow River to be included and published as part of a Comprehensive Resource Guide and Library for the Rainbow River by Linda Cheung and Dane Myers.

1. **07/2020 - Reduction of Tubes on the Rainbow River** - Although many efforts over the years have been made by City Council/staff to encourage Marion County to amend their business model to reduce the tubing congestion on the Rainbow River, it was only recently that the City of Dunnellon Police Chief through COVID-19/emergency management authority gave him the ability to close Blue Run Park if Marion County did not address the problem due to social distancing issues. This actually resulted in a 70% reduction in tubing per Marion County Parks Director. This happened under the leadership of Chief Mike McQuaig, Mayor Burns and City Council.
2. **07/2020 – Rainbow River Carrying Capacity Study** - The City has made several attempts in 2017 and 2020 to encourage Marion County and other governmental entities like FDEP to partner with City of Dunnellon to accomplish such a study to evaluate what would be considered a healthy level of recreational activity on the Rainbow River. Currently Mayor Burns is leading a discussion with Marion County, FDEP and SWFWMD to coordinate and apply for a SWFWMD grant to help fund 50% of the cost of a study. Marion County and FDEP have not made any commitments to date. Such a study could cost upward of \$200,000.
3. **3/2019 – Implementation of Ordinance #ORD2019-01** Erosion and Sediment Control to prevent suspended solids from finding their way into the local rivers.
4. **9/2019 - \$142,500 State SWFWMD Grant for Stormwater Management** - The City applied for and was awarded a multi-year grant to fund a \$285,000 stormwater project that requires the City to provide a 50% match of \$142,500. This is to perform an inventory and identify the condition and deficiencies in the City's stormwater infrastructure to reduce pollutants/suspended solids that may be able to access the river through the City's stormwater system. This will identify and prioritize future projects and will assist the City in obtaining project construction grant funds. This is a three-year grant cycle.

5. 2019 - **\$2.7 million FDEP Springs Grant** - Applied for by the City in order to decommission the Rainbow Springs failing Wastewater Treatment Plant and save a tremendous amount of money to the end users in having to bring the plant up to the 2020 FDEP improved regulatory standards. The grant has been awarded and will result in decommissioning of the failing plant and re-rating of the City of Dunnellon's (Now FGUA) main Wastewater Treatment Plant that is fully capable of handling the flow and more than meets all regulatory standards. This removed yet another wastewater treatment plant from the primary springshed zone.

6. 2017 - **\$650,000 CDBG Grant and \$300,000 State Appropriations Grant Historic District** – The City applied for and was awarded both a \$650,000 Community Development Block Grant and \$300,000 Legislative Appropriation grant to replace 100+ year old water lines and sewer laterals in the historic district that were causing infiltration to the aquifer within the springshed zone. This project has just been completed by the City and because of match requirements, the City initially invested \$198,000 in engineering and permitting toward the required match and to meet CDBG shovel-ready requirements of the project. Additionally, the City has contributed approximately \$116,000 toward road resurfacing expenses.

7. 4/2015 to Current - **MS4 Stormwater Management Program** - City is very pro-active working with FDEP to maintain compliance and participation in the Stormwater Management Program benefiting - Rainbow River, Withlacoochee River and Blue Cove Lake. The program entails the City performing extensive public education, employee training, ordinance enforcement, creation of new programs in the areas of Illicit Discharge Detection, Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control Measures, Municipal Operation Pollution Prevention, Florida-Friendly Landscape Program to support minimized use of fertilizers, Storm Drain Maintenance and Mapping Program, Industry/Business Education Program, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP).

8. 2015 – **2.3 Million FDEP Grant to Remove Septic Tanks** - City applied for and obtained FDEP grant to remove failing septic tanks along the river and in the primary springshed zone. This grant is specific to SW 180th Avenue Road (High School Road). FGUA is now in process of construction. This will allow state and school board properties along this route to connect to central sewer and abandoned their failing and non-compliant sewer package plants. This will also allow Sateke Village the opportunity to do the same.

9. 2011 – **1.3 Million Rio Vista Wastewater Grant/Loan to Decommission Failing Wastewater System** – Rio Vista was experiencing a failing and non-compliant wastewater treatment facility and under severe threat of illegal non-compliance and criminal prosecution by FDEP. Even though it was outside of the city limits, the City of Dunnellon was the closest and only entity willing to offer assistance. City of Dunnellon obtained a grant and a loan in order to decommission the failing wastewater plant from the Rainbow River and springshed area by connecting Rio Vista to the City's wastewater treatment plant. The total project cost was \$1,295,863. Grant funds were received in the amount of \$914,294. The City incurred debt, receiving bond proceeds to complete the project to be paid back over a twenty year period by Rio Vista customers.

10. 1/2016 - **#RES2016-01 – Resolution supporting the Rainbow River SWIM Plan** - Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Act. The primary goal of this SWIM plan is to identify and implement management actions and projects that will address the major issues the system faces and that will restore, maintain, and preserve the ecological balance of the Rainbow River.

11. 1/2015 - **#RES2015-01 – Resolution Pertaining to Development and Implementation of the Rainbow Springs and River Basin** – Pertaining to the development and implementation of the Rainbow Springs and River Basin Management Action Plan for the Rainbow Springs River Basin and supporting staff participation. Developed through a collaborative effort between the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), local governments in the Rainbow Springs River Basin, other local, state and regional agencies, and private and public interests to identify cost-effective actions that will be undertaken to achieve the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) adopted by DEP for the Rainbow Springs River Basin. The Dunnellon City Council acknowledged that representatives from Dunnellon have participated in the development of the Rainbow Springs and River Basin Management Action Plan and the management actions contained within it.

12. 8/2011 - **#ORD2011-08 – Ordinance River Etiquette** - Controlling behavior and treatment of the river, giving law enforcement the legislative strength they needed to enforce the applicable laws.

13. 5/2009 - **#ORD2009-06 – Fertilizer Use Regulation** – Promoting a landscape plan while minimizing use of fertilizers in order to protect the rivers.

14. 10/2008 - **#ORD2007-25 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment to Conservation Element** – Among the changes within this amendment the minimum setbacks of not less than 50 feet from the ordinary high water line of rivers and navigable coves, and abutting wetlands for structures and not less than 100 feet for septic tanks and drainfields for all development along the river was changed to increase 50 and 100 feet to 150 feet, and became newly identified as the river corridor protection area and now protected through a conservation easement.

15. 11/2008 – **#ORD2008-01 River Protection Ordinance** – Providing for standards to protect designated river corridors. Section 78-71 designated the following areas as river corridor protection areas (RCPA):

- (1) The shoreline and all land lying within 150 feet of the ordinary high water line of the Rainbow River and its navigable coves.
- (2) The shoreline and all land lying within 150 feet of the ordinary high water line of the Withlacoochee River and its navigable coves.

16. 4/2007 - **#RES2007-04 – Resolution authorizing Application to FCT for Grant** - This authorized the City to apply for a grant to aid in the City's purchase and preservation of Nelson/Cunningham River Property now identified as Blue Run Park of Dunnellon. This was a multi-entity effort to include research, application preparation and submittal, funding, long-term commitment to capital improvements and ongoing maintenance. This FCT Grant award lead to a

Perpetual Interlocal Agreement between City of Dunnellon and Marion County for usage of the passive park partially as a tuber's exit for Marion County's KP Hole recreational tubing and kayaking program. The City has responsibility to over-see the FCT approved Park Management Plan and all annual reporting responsibilities to the State. The agreement outlines shared responsibilities for development and maintenance between Marion County and City of Dunnellon. The City does not receive any designated revenue to help support the City's share of ongoing maintenance, utility expenses, monitoring or reporting expenses pertaining to the park. The City's share of expenses are paid for from the City's ad valorem taxes.

17. 2004 – 2007 – **Multi-Year Septic to Central Sewer Program** – the City initiated a broad base program to remove septic tanks through the City, along and near the rivers and migrate these areas to City central sewer. The septic tanks were backfilled and abandoned. This included all of Vogt Springs, Blue Cove, Indian Cove Farms, etc. This program was funded from a combination of grants and SRF loan applied for by the City as follows:

Federal Stimulus Grant -	\$3,105,636
Legislative Appropriations Grant -	\$500,000
CDBG Grant -	\$55,120
FDEP Grant -	\$8,100,894
CDBG #2 -	\$650,000
SRF Loan -	\$5,348,642 (Interim Financing and City Match requirement)

18. 9/2000 - **#ORD2000-16 – Regulations of Rainbow River and Withlacoochee Navigable Waterways** - The City Council of the City of Dunnellon desires for diligent and proper enforcement of state, county and local rules and regulations as they pertain to the waterways within the geographical limits of the City of Dunnellon as they are now set and as they are expanded from time to time; and whereas the City Council of the City of Dunnellon believes it necessary to redefine said waterways for the purposes set forth herein.

19. 1978 to current – **City Police River Patrol Program** - The City has placed a significant amount of funding to include capital equipment costs and salaries over the years in patrolling and monitoring to ensure protection of the river and safety of those enjoying it. Recently an enhancement to the program was added to train those reserves/volunteers participating in the program for improved coordination with Fire/Rescue for reduced response times for river related rescues.

Drafted and submitted by Dawn M. Bowne, City Administrator
09/03/2020